

Mesa Human Relations Advisory Board

2014/2015 Strategic Plan



Created August 23, 2014

Purpose

The Human Relations Advisory Board advises the City Council about racial, religious, ethnic, cultural, disability or other human relations issues affecting the City of Mesa and delivery of City services to Mesa residents, businesses, and visitors. The board recommends policies to eliminate discrimination and prejudice and to promote mutual understanding and harmony. The board serves as the public forum for citizen input on human relations issues. Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the City Council Chambers, 57 E. First Street or other locations throughout the City. Members are appointed for staggered terms of three years and represent the City's diverse population.

Human Relations Advisory Board Mission

Create an inclusive, respectful, and equitable community.

Human Relations Advisory Board Vision

The City of Mesa is a community that includes, respects, and is enriched by its diversity.

Human Relations Advisory Board Goals

- #1 The Human Relations Advisory Board is recognized by the community as *the* place to go for dialogue and leadership on diversity-related issues.
- #2 The Human Relations Advisory Board is aware, educated and responsive to human relations issues in the community.
- #3 The Human Relations Advisory Board recommends actions to the City Council and city leadership to ensure that Mesa's diverse populations have equal access to and equal treatment in receiving City services.

FY 2014/2015 HRAB Work Plan

The Human Relations Advisory Board's work plan includes standing activities that the Board carries out every year and new activities that further the mission and goals of the Board.

Goal #1 The Human Relations Advisory Board is recognized by the community as *the* place to go for dialogue and leadership on diversity-related issues.

Standing Activity: Monitor revisions to the Police Community Forums and keep the Board informed of changes. (Lead: Denise Heap).

Standing Activity: Participate in the regional human relations commission meetings and regional events such as the annual Unity Walk and Pride Parade. (Lead: Committee of the whole.)

Standing Activity: Designate a liaison to participate in the planning of the annual Mesa MLK event and keep the Board informed of progress. (Lead: Cliff Moon)

Goal #2 The Human Relations Advisory Board is aware, educated and responsive to human relations issues in the community.

Standing Activity: The Disabilities Action Team will evaluate the adequacy of services and programs for people with disabilities and the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008. (Lead: Cheryl Anderson)

Standing Activity: Monitor transportation services for people with disabilities including reviewing a quarterly report and annual report on East Valley Dial-A-Ride (Lead: Disabilities Action Team).

Standing Activity: Monitor the Mesa City Court protocol for diverting defendants who have mental health issues, veterans, or are homeless (Lead: Disabilities Action Team).

Carryover Activity: Complete and distribute the educational pamphlet on service animals (Lead: Disabilities Action Team).

New Activity #1: Hold three town hall meetings to educate the community on mental health and substance abuse issues (for community, business, and leadership) (Lead: Disabilities Action Team).

New Activity #2: Explore and assess the issue of housing for people with disabilities (Lead: Disabilities Action Team).

New Activity #3: Explore and assess the need for and feasibility of creating a Psychiatric Recovery Center in the East Valley (Lead: Disabilities Action Team).

Standing Activity: Continue the Community Cinema public education and civic engagement initiative featuring monthly screenings (between September and May) of films from the Emmy Award-winning PBS series Independent Lens. (Lead: Staff/Tony Liuzzo)

New Activity #4: Expand the high school portion of the cinema series to more than Dobson High School (Lead: Youth Diversity Education Team).

New Activity #5: Work with the MLK Committee to organize a Youth Leadership Development conference (Lead: Youth Diversity Education Team).

Carryover Activity: Increase the number of speakers enrolled in the Speaker's Bureau and market the availability of the Speaker's Bureau as a community resource. (Lead: Cliff Moon/Full Board)

Carryover Activity: Evaluate the youth outreach survey data and create options for ways to connect with youth and educate them on diversity related issues. (Lead: Youth Diversity Education Team)

Carryover Activity: Increase the presence of the Board and people with disabilities at the two Celebrate Mesa events as a first step to create a community resource fair. (Lead: Lu Ann Schmidt/Full Board)

New Activity #6: Explore and assess whether bullying is an issue in Mesa (Lead: Issues Research and Action Team).

New Activity #7: Identify and evaluate options for addressing the issues that impact the LGBT population as identified in the Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Inclusion and Diversity Report. (Lead: Issues Research and Action Team)

New Activity #8: Identify and evaluate options for addressing the issues that impact Hispanic or Latino residents as identified in the Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Inclusion and Diversity Report. (Lead: Issues Research and Action Team)

Goal #3 **The Human Relations Advisory Board recommends actions to the City Council and city leadership to ensure that Mesa's diverse populations have equal access to and equal treatment in receiving City services.**

Carryover Activity: Create and evaluate options and recommendations for the Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Inclusion and Diversity Report. (Lead: Issues Research and Action Team)

Carryover Activity: Evaluate and determine appropriate action for the five recommendations forwarded by the Veteran's Task Force (Lead: Full Board).

Issues Research and Action Team: Colleen Byron, Chair, Denise Heap, Nadia Taylor

Disabilities Action Team: Cheryl Anderson, Chair, Mark Tompert, Lu Ann Schmidt, Denise Heap, Karen Frias-Long (for Town Halls)

Youth Diversity Action Team: Tony Liuzzo, Chair, Karen Frias-Long, Co-Chair, Cliff Moon, Nadia Taylor, Denise Heap

Board Roles

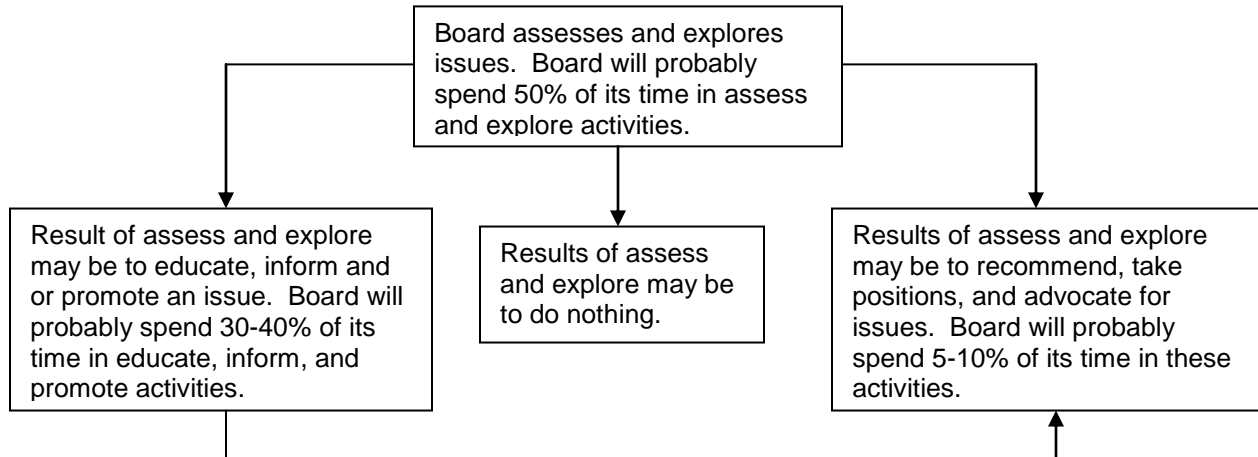
1. Raise the visibility of the Human Relations Advisory Board to become the "go to" body for the community.
2. Identify what is happening in the community regarding human relations through forums and outreach.
3. Educate ourselves, the City Council, and the community about human relations issues in Mesa.
4. Recommend action to the City Council when issues identified in the community require action.

Ways Board Members Can Carry Out Their Roles

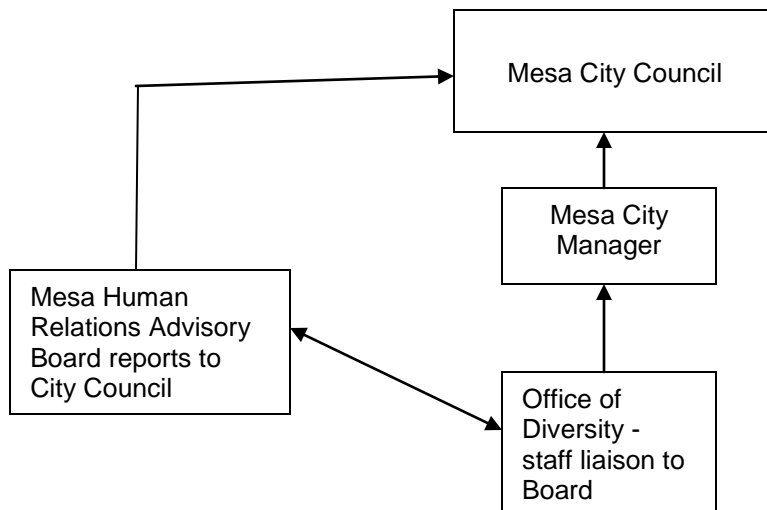
- Bring contacts for speakers and subject matter experts on issues explored by the Board.
- Regularly attend meetings prepared to participate in the meeting. Need a quorum.
- Participate in major diversity events (i.e. MLK, Unity Walk, Pride Parade, forums etc.)
- Ask people what they think – taking the pulse of the community.
- Tell people about your work on the human relations advisory committee. Raise the visibility of the Board.
- Help with the research. Bring information and sources to the Board.
- Work on a subcommittee or ad hoc committee and take assignments.
- Read, study and learn. Listen and seek to understand multiple sides to an issue.
- Share information with each other and the Council.
- Build coalitions – reach out to other groups and individuals.
- Network with other jurisdictions. Find out what other communities are doing.
- Bring the community together for dialogue. (Need clarity on the ordinance that created the HRAB.)
- Must follow the open meeting law (i.e. Do not hit 'reply all' on Board emails, cannot poll individual Board members outside of meetings, meetings must be posted in advance, etc.).
- Cannot speak to the media on behalf of the Board unless the Board has adopted an official position on an issue.

Board Process

Process: Board goes out into the community ---- Document what the Board has learned (either as general education or specific issues) ---- Present to the City Council with the Board presenting.



Advisory Board Reporting Relationship



Is This A Human Relations Board Issue?

- How does the issue affect Mesa City government and the delivery of city services?
- Does the Board's involvement work toward eliminating discrimination and prejudice?
- Does the Board's involvement promote mutual understanding and harmony?

Human Relations Advisory Board's Accomplishments 2013-2014

- The Board participated in community events such as the Unity Walk, MLK events, and Phoenix Pride Parade.
- Regional collaboration through participation in the Regional Human Relations Commission.
- Invited Senator Jeff Flake to participate in the Martin Luther King Jr. Parade.
- Convened the Mayor's Veteran's Task Force.
- Convened the Disabilities Action Team.
- Convened the Youth Diversity Education Team.
- Hosted the Community Cinema series. Had six events at the Mesa Arts Center, as well as several events at Dobson High School and Mesa Public Library.
- Collaborated with Morrison Institute for Public Policy at Arizona State University to complete the 'Mesa Opinion Survey: Satisfaction with Life in Mesa and Perceptions of Discrimination and Intolerance'.
- Hosted three community dialogues entitled "Mesa Speaks, Mesa Listens: Community Conversations on Inclusion & Diversity".
- Attended the Fall Celebrate Mesa event to promote HRAB and diversity awareness.
- Created the infrastructure and process for a Speakers Bureau.
- Recommended the Proclamation for Vietnamese Heritage Day.
- Provided feedback for and supported the General Plan.
- Elementary school counselors provided training on dealing with the children of deployed persons.
- Completed initial research on possible support for city policies related to gender identity.
- Completed initial research on a hate crimes ordinance.
- Completed initial research on bullying.
- Designed and distributed a survey on the best ways to reach youth (21 and younger).
- Evaluated the possibility of adding a youth seat to the advisory board.